

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 126393 TOSEC 130188

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 126393 TOSEC 130188

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SCHAUFEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO, AO

SUBJECT:BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: ANGOLAN POLITICAL DEVELOP-

REF: STATE 123884 (TOSEC 130051)

1. ANGOLA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS: IN A SPEECH AT CUBAN
EMBASSY IN LUANDA MAY 18, ANGOLAN PRIME MINISTER
NASCIMENTO ANNOUNCED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD DEMANDED
WITHDRAWAL OF ALL PORTUGUESE DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL,
STATING THAT ANGOLAN-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS HAD REACHED A
CRITICAL SITUATION AND THAT HE HOPED PORTUGUESE LEADERS
"WOULD REGAIN THEIR GOOD SENSE" SO THAT RELATIONS
COULD BE NORMALIZED. REFTEL PROVIDED ANALYSIS OF THIS
ACTION FROM LISBON PERSPECTIVE. WASHINGTON POST
(DAVID OTTAWAY) AND NEW YORK TIMES (MARVINE HOWE)
MAY 20 CARRIED REPORTS FROM LUANDA GIVING MORE DETAILS
OF NASCIMENTO SPEECH. NASCIMENTO REPORTEDLY STATED
THAT HIS GOVERNMENT "PUTS HIGH VALUE ON ITS RELATIONS
WITH THE SOVIET UNION;" EMPHASIZED ANGOLA'S CLOSE
RELATIONS WITH CUBA, INCLUDING BROAD CUBAN ECONOMIC
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 126393 TOSEC 130188

ASSISTANCE; AND SAID THAT ANGOLA INTENDED TO ESTABLISH

"PREFERENTIAL" TIES WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND ALSO WITH THE SCANDINAVIAN GOVTS WHICH HAD HELPED

MPLA DURING ANTICOLONIAL STRUGGLE.

2. PM TO VISIT MOSCOW: TIMES ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED ANNOUNCEMENT THAT NASCIMENTO WOULD LEAVE MAY 22 ON HIS FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO MOSCOW.

3. RELATIONS WITH US: POST ARTICLE QUOTED ANGOLAN FOREIGN MINISTER DOS SANTOS AS STATING IN AN INTERVIEW THAT ANGOLA WOULD ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE US ONLY IF THE US RESPECTED ITS POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY AND STOPPED INTERFERING IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. DOS SANTOS REPORTEDLY ADDED THAT REPORTS CIRCULATING IN LUANDA THAT CUBAN TROOPS HAVE BEGUN RETURNING HOME WERE "SPECULATION" AND THAT THE TIMETABLE FOR THEIR WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE DECIDED JOINTLY WITH CUBA AND ANNOUNCED AT AN "OPPORTUNE TIME."

4. APPLICATION FOR UN MEMBERSHIP: DOS SANTOS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING ANGOLA WOULD NOT DELAY ITS REQUEST FOR ADMISSION TO UN AS US WANTED, BUT WOULD RESUBMIT ITS APPLICATION "WITHIN NEXT TWO WEEKS."

5. FOREIGN-OWNED PROPERTY CONFISCATED: ANGOLAN PRESIDENT NETO ANNOUNCED IN A SPEECH MAY 17 THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO CONFISCATE ALL BUSINESSES AND PROPERTY LEFT BY PORTUGUESE AND OTHER FOREIGNERS WHO HAVE DEPARTED ANGOLA.

6. COMMENT: WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT LUANDA'S BREAK WITH LISBON WAS INSTIGATED BY SOVIETS, WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR INFLUENCE IN LUANDA THROUGH INTERIOR MINISTER NITO ALVES AND FOREIGN MINISTER DOS SANTOS. THE LATTER IN PARTICULAR IS REPORTED TO BESTRONGLY PRO-SOVIET AND IS MARRIED TO A RUSSIAN. NASCIMENTO'S COMMENTS (PARA 1 ABOVE) ON ANGOLA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND ANGOLAN FOOT-DRAGGING ON ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 126393 TOSEC 130188

NATIONS OTHER THAN PORTUGAL, CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN THIS LIGHT. IN THE GROWING POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN MPLA, SOVIETS APPARENTLY HOPE TO REDUCE THE POWER OF THE MORE INDEPENDENT-MINDED NETO (THOUGH POSSIBLY WITHOUT ACTUALLY REMOVING HIM), AND THEREBY DIMINISH LIKELIHOOD OF A SIGNIFICANT WESTERN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA TO COUNTER THAT OF SOVIETS AND CUBANS.

7. CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY LEFT BY DEPARTED PORTUGUESE, MANY OF WHOM HAD HOPED TO RETURN TO ANGOLA, IS BOUND TO BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM BETWEEN ANGOLA AND PORTUGAL, AND THUS A FURTHER IMPEDIMENT TO ANY FUTURE

RESUMPTION OF FORMAL RELATIONS. MOREOVER, THE FACT THAT THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE REPRESENTED BY THOSE PORTUGUESE WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO ANGOLA WILL LIKELY MEAN A GREATER ROLE FOR THE CUBANS, SOVIETS AND OTHER BLOC PERSONNEL THERE.

8. LUANDA'S BREAK WITH LISBON HAS LITTLE DIRECT EFFECT ON US INTERESTS, ASIDE FROM ELIMINATING ONE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON ANGOLAN DEVELOPMENTS, AND EVEN HERE THE EFFECT IS SMALL, SINCE A NUMBER OF PORTUGUESE POLITICIANS HAVE THEIR OWN LINES INTO MPLA. NOR DOES THE CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY HAVE A SERIOUS DIRECT EFFECT ON US INTERESTS: OUR LUANDA LOCAL STAFF WAS RECENTLY INFORMED THAT THE AUTHORITIES WERE TAKING OVER US OFFICIAL HOUSING IN LUANDA (OTHER THAN THE CONSUL GENERAL'S RESIDENCE, WHICH THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED), BUT WERE RETURNING THE CG'S RESIDENCE, AND WOULD LEAVE THE OFFICE BUILDING ALONE. MAJOR US BUSINESS INTERESTS DO NOT FALL INTO THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE CONFISCATED PROPERTIES: ANGOLAN OFFICIALS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN SPEAKING IN TERMS OF GULF OIL AND OTHER MAJOR FOREIGN COMPANIES CONTINUING TO OPERATE IN ANGOLA, PROVIDED TERMS ARE REVISED TO ANGOLA'S SATISFACTION. ROBINSON

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